

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 21553 01 OF 02 081614Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----017436 081620Z /43
O 081603Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6577

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 21553

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, LE, SY, IS, UR
SUBJECT: GROMYKO ON SITUATION IN LEBANON

1. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE SALT DISCUSSIONS
MID-DAY SEPTEMBER 8, PAUL WARNKE AND I MET PRIVATELY
WITH GROMYKO AND DOBRYNIN (WARNKE'S INTERPRETER
ACCOMPANIED HIM, SO GROMYKO ASKED SUKHODREV TO SIT
IN). FOLLOWING A BRIEF EXCHANGE BETWEEN WARNKE
AND GROMYKO ON DISARMAMENT MATTERS, REPORTED
SEPARATELY, I RAISED THE CAMP DAVID TALKS AND THE
LEBANESE SITUATION WITH GROMYKO, NOTING I WAS DOING
SO UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SECRETARY AND IN
LINE WITH OUR PAST PRACTICE OF BRIEFING THE SOVIET
SIDE ON MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS.

2. REGARDING THE CURRENT SUMMIT TALKS, I TOLD
GROMYKO I WOULD NOT TAKE UP HIS TIME WITH A LENGTHY
ORAL PRESENTATION BUT WOULD LEAVE HIM A NON-PAPER
BASED UPON MY TALKING POINTS (AS PER ATTACHMENT TWO,
DEPARTMENT ACTION MEMORANDUM OF SEPTEMBER 1,
NUMBER 7817236).

3. REGARDING LEBANON, I SAID I HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED
BY THE SECRETARY TO EXPRESS TO GROMYKO OUR CONCERNS
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ABOUT THE LEBANESE SITUATION, AND THEN MADE THE
POINTS OUTLINED IN PARAGRAPH THREE OF STATE 225265.
I ADDED THAT I WAS CONFIDENT GROMYKO SHARED OUR
DESIRE TO AVOID A WIDENING OF THE CONFLICT IN THIS
AREA, AND THE SOVIET SIDE WOULD DO WHAT IT COULD
TOWARD THIS END. I ALSO NOTED THAT I WAS SURE SEC-
RETARY VANCE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN GROMYKO'S COMMENTS

CONCERNING HIS RECENT MEETING WITH SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM.

4. GROMYKO RESPONDED THAT OF COURSE THE SYRIANS WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THE LEBANESE SITUATION, AND DID NOT WISH TO EXACERBATE THAT SITUATION. THE SYRIANS HAVE ASSURED US, GROMYKO CONTINUED, THAT THE PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP ADHERES TO THE SAME POSITION. THE SYRIANS AND THE PALESTINIANS HAVE MAJOR CONCERNS, HOWEVER, REGARDING THE ACTIONS AND INTENTIONS OF ISRAEL. THE SOVIET SIDE RECOGNIZES THAT THE SYRIANS HAVE GOOD GROUNDS FOR SUCH CONCERNS -- REGARDING THE ISRAELIS AS WELL AS CERTAIN CIRCLES IN LEBANON. AFTER ALL, ISRAEL RECENTLY UNDERTOOK AGGRESSIVE AND PROVOCATIVE ACTIONS IN LEBANON. AND ISRAELI LEADERS NOW SAY THEY'LL TAKE THIS OR THAT ACTION IF EVENTS DO NOT PLEASE THEM.

5. AS FOR THE SOVIET POSITION, SAID GROMYKO, WE OF COURSE WOULD LIKE TO SEE A CALM SITUATION IN LEBANON. THE AMERICAN SIDE COULD BE SURE THAT IF THE USSR LEARNS OF ANY SYRIAN OR PALESTINIAN INTENTIONS TO EXACERBATE THE SITUATION IN LEBANON, WE WILL TELL THEM BLUNTLY OF OUR OPPOSITION TO SUCH ACTIONS. BUT AT PRESENT, THE USSR HAS NO INFORMATION THAT WOULD CONFIRM THE EXISTENCE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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SUCH INTENTIONS. GROMYKO REPEATED THAT THE USSR WANTED TO SEE A CALM SITUATION, AND THE USSR WOULD EXERT ALL OF ITS INFLUENCE IN THAT DIRECTION. HE ADDED THAT OF COURSE THE SOVIET UNION WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE USG ACT IN THE SAME VEIN, TO RESTRAIN ISRAEL BOTH IN WORDS AND DEEDS.

6. I SAID THAT ON THE BASIS OF MY EXPERIENCE AS AMBASSADOR IN TEL AVIV, I KNEW THAT THE SURVIVAL OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN LEBANON WAS A DEEPLY EMOTIONAL PROBLEM IN ISRAEL, AND IT WOULD BE MOST UNFORTUNATE IF SYRIAN ACTIONS INFLAMED THOSE EMOTIONS. GROMYKO COMMENTED THAT EMOTIONAL CONCERN COULD NOT JUSTIFY UNJUST ACTIONS BY ONE SOVEREIGN STATE AGAINST ANOTHER; I NOTED THAT I WAS NOT SPEAKING IN LEGAL TERMS BUT OF A PRACTICAL PROBLEM. AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, ONE SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE ISRAELI ATTITUDE TOWARD THIS QUESTION. IN ANY CASE, IT WAS GOOD TO HEAR THAT THE USSR SHARED OUR CONCERN OVER THE LEBANESE SITUATION, AND I WOULD OF COURSE REPORT GROMYKO'S VIEWS TO SECRETARY VANCE.

7. GROMYKO CONCLUDED WITH THE STANDARD LINE THAT THE U.S. WAS NOT ADEQUATELY EXERCISING ITS CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE OVER ISRAEL. I SAID I SAW NO POINT IN DEBATING THIS QUESTION: WE HAD COVERED THIS GROUND BEFORE AND WERE FAMILIAR WITH EACH OTHER'S POSITIONS. GROMYKO COULD BE SURE THAT MY GOVERNMENT WAS DOING EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER TO RESTRAIN THE PRINCIPAL PARTICIPANTS. IN ANY CASE, MORE IMPORTANT AT PRESENT WAS FOR US TO KEEP CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION OPEN REGARDING THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

-----017453 081619Z /43

O 081603Z SEP 78

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6578

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 MOSCOW 21553

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GROMYKO AGREED ON NEED TO DO THIS. TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW21553
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780366-0778
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780988/aaaacvee.tel
Line Count: 148
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 103d1054-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1504478
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GROMYKO ON SITUATION IN LEBANON
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, LE, SY, IS, UR, US, (GROMYKO, ANDREY ANDREYEVICH), (WARNKE, PAUL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/103d1054-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014